

The Viking King's Golden Treasure



About the discovery of a lost manuscript,
Harald Bluetooth's grave and
the location of the fortress of Jomsborg

Aspects regarding the source material of Harald Bluetooth's
grave in Poland Sven Rosborn 2021-12-29

More information about the book can be found at:
<https://www.curmsun.org/> (in swedish)

In July 2021 the author published the book *"The Viking King's Golden Treasure. About the discovery of a lost manuscript, Harald Bluetooth's grave and the location of the fortress of Jomsborg."* The book details the discovery of a completely new source material describing the 10th century history of Scandinavia, and Denmark in particular. This article is written to clarify and expand on the circumstances surrounding the analysis of this source material. As a professional archaeologist and museum official the author has primarily worked within the field of archaeology to determine the authenticity of the discovery. Archaeological results have thus been put in relation to the discovery of the grave itself as well as the text in the recently discovered chronicle "Gesta Wulinensis", where comparisons give clear evidence of the authenticity of the material as a historic source. This will be presented toward the end of the article.

The discovery of the grave in Wiejkowo near Wolin in northern Poland was made all the way back in the year 1841. A part of the large gold treasure found in the grave economically enabled the local congregation to emigrate to the United States to escape religious persecution in Pomerania. Knowledge of the grave was thus lost since nearly everyone involved in the discovery had disappeared from the site. In 1945 Stefan and Michael Sielski helped the priest of Wiejkowo to escape to the Western-Allied side. The priest did however wish to save the historic material he kept from being plundered by the Soviet troops and thus entrusted it to the two brothers. Other than object from the burial chamber the priest also had numerous older documents passed down by his predecessors. The priest in 1841 was a relative of the local count and during his research of the discovered tomb he was given these documents by the count, which had been kept in his castle library since the Middle Ages. Since 1841 these documents were inherited by the succession of priests within the parsonage in Wiejkowo, until they came into the possession of the Sielski family in 1945.

In the book *"The Viking King's Golden Treasure"* the author describes this sequence of events in detail. The time span from the year 1841 until the late 1900s and the sequence of events is known from a very large preserved source material comprised of letters, diaries, photographs and objects, as well as what still living people have been able to tell of events they have witnessed. Below I will start with a chronological account of our research from the discovery of a golden disc originating from the grave was made in 2014.

A golden disc with text in Latin

In the autumn of 2014 the author was visited in Malmö by Tomas Sielski and his 11 years old daughter Maja. Tomas' grandmother had passed away half a year prior. Tomas and his parents had moved to Sweden from Poland in 1986, and the grandmother Stanislawka came to Sweden in 1988. She was a notorious collector and brought about 250 large boxes with her to Sweden, containing letters in post-stamped envelopes, notebooks, photographs and various smaller objects. Following her death in the spring of 2014 her grandchild Tomas inherited all of this. While Stanislawka was alive she had gifted several old metal objects and jewellery to her great-granddaughters Maja and Julia, which the children had used as toys.

In school Maja had learned how Latin writing from the Viking Age looked and discovered that a metal disc given to her by Stanislawka had such writing on it. When she

started to polish the grey disc she discovered that it was actually made of gold. It was this disc they wanted to show me on this autumn evening in 2014. It became the start of an incredible research project leading back in time a thousand years.

Having been the director of the Malmö City museums for 17 years, keeping one of the largest collections of coins and medals outside the national institution in Stockholm, I could immediately see that it was a cast golden object. As the Latin writing on it told about the Viking king Harald Gormsson (Harald Bluetooth) the question became if this could indeed be an object from his time.

I immediately called together a small group of my researcher colleagues and antiquarians who all possessed great knowledge of subjects concerning Viking Age history and objects. Anders Ödman is a docent at the archaeological institution of Lund's University, Maria Cinthio is the daughter of the middle ages professor Erik Cinthio and one of the foremost authorities of the enormous Viking Age collections at the museum of cultural history in Lund, and Catharina Ödman, previously the chief archaeologist in Malmö and custodian of the extensive archive and find material at the Malmö City museums. Attempts were also made to contact Danish researchers at the National Archives and National Museum, which I would have liked to include in the group, but to no avail. They were not interested in partaking of the research material and have since the start of the project declined contact, despite several attempts by me to reach out to the National Museum by mail.

The gold disc was examined at an early stage by the company "*KarAna Ädelmetall*" which are specialists at the metal composition of gold objects from the 18th century and onwards. Following an examination they found that the golden disc contained a number of impurities which did not correspond to any gold compositions they had previously encountered during their extensive operation. Despite the reliable evidence found by our group that the disc was cast rumours had arisen that it was embossed and thus a forgery as it was not possible to emboss objects of that size during the Viking Age. The group arranged a meeting at Lund's University to perform a microscopic examination of the disc. An archaeology professor, several established researchers from Lund and some students were present. See a swedish video clip here: <https://youtu.be/NGyyg57RO6A>

Here it could once again be established that the disc was cast. Cavities underneath the letters showed that letters cut out in wax had been applied in a wax mold produced before the casting. Faint ripples in one part of the metal surface also showed that the mold had stood on end and the smelt had not been sufficiently heated when poured into the cast mold.

Despite this rumours persisted regarding the metal composition of the disc. We then contacted professor Leif Johansson at the Geological institution at Lund's University, who performed an analysis of the various metals of the disc. He could confirm that the gold object contained small traces of various metals, just as KarAna Ädelmetall previously had concluded. This would indicate that the work had been done in a more primitive workshop. See a swedish video clip here: <https://youtu.be/9pqyGg1aYrI>

To arrange the insurance of the gold disc Tomas Sielski had contacted Lloyds in England. They flew in their forgery experts and after a careful examination they too arrived at the conclusion that the disc most likely was genuine and from that time period, i.e. the 10th century. The project group also personally contacted Lars Olof Lagerqvist, who prior to his retirement was the director of the "*Royal Coin Cabinet*" in Stockholm for many years, and is one of the

world's foremost experts when it comes to coin and medal forgeries. During our visit he closely examined the disc and found it strange that it had been called into question that it was a genuine object from the Viking Age. The research group also arranged a lengthy meeting with the distinguished Polish researchers Mateusz Bogucki and Przemysław Urbańczyk from the institute of archaeology and ethnology in Warsaw. This meeting was held at the University library in Lund.

In 2018 professor Alison Finlay from "Birkbeck, University of London" contacted us. She and the Icelandic researcher Þórdís Edda Jóhannesdóttir were working on a new edition of "*The Saga of the Jomsvikings*" and were interested in information about the discovery, in particular the golden disc from the grave. As a fellow researcher she was obviously provided with all the facts she requested. This resulted in the golden disc becoming the cover picture of the book "*The Saga of the Jomsvikings*".



The fact that the golden disc is not a modern forgery is also made clear in preserved letters with post-stamped envelopes from the 1950s sent between Stanisława and her mother Antonina. The letters tell that the object was one of the things that Stanisława's husband Michael and his brother Stefan recovered from the stone chamber grave by the church in Wiejkowo in 1945. It is also revealed that Stanisława, who was deeply Christian, had contacted a nun in Rome to inquire what manner of object it might be. The back side did after all depict a large Christian cross. There can thus be no doubt that the gold disc is from the grave in Wiejkowo.

About the grave and the objects from Wiejkowo

In 1945 Tomas Sielski's grandfather Michael and his brother had helped the priest of Wiejkowo and a resistance fighter against the Nazis to reach the Western-Allied side. With their help the brothers had come to the church in Wiejkowo and the ruined parsonage there. In the cellar there were several documents concealed by the priest and a small old stone staircase leading down to the stone walled burial chamber. Here a number of objects were found: gold objects, the remains of two badly rusted swords, a number of lead plates with inscriptions and a casket with many silver coins. The priest gave all of this to the brothers as he did not want it to fall into the hands of the Soviet soldiers.

The material was then kept in the attic of Michael's house in Kozalin. When his mother-in-law Antonina visited them in the early 1960s she became interested in the history around the grave. She brought the diary written by the priest of Wiejkowo in the 1840s home with her. The diary describes in detail how the grave and its content was discovered during the con-

struction of the current church in the spring of 1841 at the site of a medieval church ruin. In a large number of preserved, dated and postage-stamped letters between Antonina and her daughter from around 1960 Antonina quotes excerpts from the diary.

Reading through the priest's diary Antonina discovered several quotes the priest had made from an old chronicle he had access to. In a preserved, postage-stamped letter to the daughter Antonina inquires about this chronicle: *"Most of the information uncovered by the German priest came from an old chronicle recording the history of the Wolin diocese. Perhaps it can be found among all the old books on your attic. I do not believe it is written on paper, but rather on parchment. If you find it, treat it with utmost care. It is very valuable and should be handed over to your parish priest or perhaps to the honourable bishop Ignacy himself."*

The aforementioned bishop Jeż Ignacy was born in 1914 and was ordained bishop in 1960. Through our research we have learned that the daughter did indeed find the manuscript and sent it, not to the bishop, but to her mother. In addition to the chronicle Antonina also received a large number of original 12th century documents from her daughter, describing the three Cistercian Order monasteries in Swedish Scania and Småland and in Polish Pomerania. These documents were also in the possession of the local priest up until 1945. Antonina was able to trace their history backward in time. They were kept in the Cistercian monastery in Colbatz near Stettin, 60 km from Wiejkowo, from when it was founded in 1173. During the reformation in 1535 they were moved to the possession of the count of Wiejkowo, and the priest brought them to his parsonage from the count's library in 1841.

Antonina made a list of all the writings she borrowed from her daughter. The list includes the chronicle *"Gesta Wulinensis"*, described in this manner: *"Gesta Wulinensis ecclesiae pontificum, 1140-1173. The chronicle contains an appendix with fragments of earlier annals of unknown name describing the history of the Danes between 941 and 1025."* In his diary from the 1840s the priest also mentions having found an original letter from 1267 in the count's archive where this chronicle is mentioned as the *"Gesta Wulinensis ecclesiae pontificum"*.

Antonina, who was educated at the University of Vienna in the early 20th century, knew Latin, Polish and German. Borrowing the original chronicle from her daughter in 1963 she translated the Latin text of the chronicle into Polish. It is this translation we now have access to. As we understand it she did this to preserve the content and make it available in her native Polish language. The chronicle consists of three different authored manuscripts, one from the 990s, one about the period from about 1000 until 1030, and one stretching up until the mid 12th century. The latter parts describe the oldest time period of Poland as an independent nation. Since it was not in the interest of the Soviets to promote Polish independence Antonina likely tried to preserve this important information about her homeland for posterity with her translation. Obviously she could not publish her translation and have it printed in the Soviet-ruled Poland, and instead sent it to her daughter. This extensive document was not discovered until in 2019 when it was found in the large collections left behind by Tomas Sielski's grandmother. The chronicle material is around 150 handwritten pages.

Regarding the authenticity of the chronicle

As an established archaeologist, museum official and cultural historian the author was of course presented with the question if this newly discovered chronicle, which in its oldest part provides all new unique information about Danish 10th century history among other things, could be genuine. As previously mentioned the problem right from the start was that no Danish national institution was interested in seeing the material or even have a dialogue with

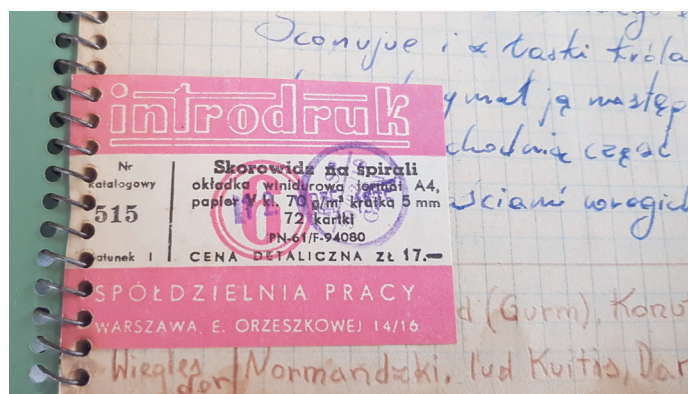
us. I could however present evidence that the chronicle was genuine based on my colleagues and my own scientific specialization and education within the field of archaeological research. Antonina's 1963 translation of the chronicle mentions things about 10th century Denmark which at the time was unknown to historic research and other preserved medieval manuscripts. Knowledge of these things were only uncovered through archaeological examinations and discoveries made far later than the 1960s. Antonina could thus not have known about these things at the time. I will now present parts of this evidence material.

The time of translation of the "Gesta Wulinensis"

First it had to be determined that Antonina's translation really could be dated to the year that was mentioned in the letters and transcribed documents, i.e. the year 1963, and that it was Antonina herself who had written it.

Using the numerous preserved letters between Antonina and her daughter Stanisława it could be safely determined that the handwriting in the transcription of the chronicle was indeed Antonina's. As the translation was written on spiral notepads with attached pages and text in ongoing tight flow no segments of text could have been inserted into the manuscript later on. We sent text and paper samples to professor dr hab. Tadeusz Widła of forensic science in Poland for analysis; an eminent researcher specialized in handwriting research.

After an examination he concluded that the chemical composition of the paper was from the mid 20th century. The pen used was of a type which when writing gave a line structure which argued against it being more modern pens made in 1970 and onward. We were also given information that the spiral notepad used was only manufactured from February 1962 and three more years. In Soviet Poland you had to obtain permission to manufacture a product during a limited time, after which the permission had to be renewed with a new registration number. The product had to be labelled with this particular number, in this case a small printed note that is attached to the spiral notepad, see picture.



The control mark in the spiral notepad which shows that this was manufactured in the early 1960s.

Antonina died in 1979 and thus the material cannot be more recent than this year, but through the scientific analysis described above there should be not doubt that the translation of the Latin original into Polish was made in 1963. Antonina also dated every page in the spiral notepad allowing us to follow the translation work day to day in the year 1963. When Antonina made the Polish translation she also used a manner of writing typical of her own time (she was born around the turn of the century 1900) which diverges from a more modern Polish way of writing.

Archaeological fact material 1

In 1977 Rikard Holmberg made a doctoral dissertation at Lund's University about "*The Middle Ages at the Öresund coast*". For the first time evidence was presented of a likely late Viking Age ring fortress in Borgeby in Scania, located near the Öresund coast. All that remains of the fortress is a faint elevation in the ground, corresponding to only a fourth of this ring fortress. In the early 1990s I could back an excavation inside the ring fortress to discover if there had been any Viking Age construction at the site, as the chairman of the Borgeby

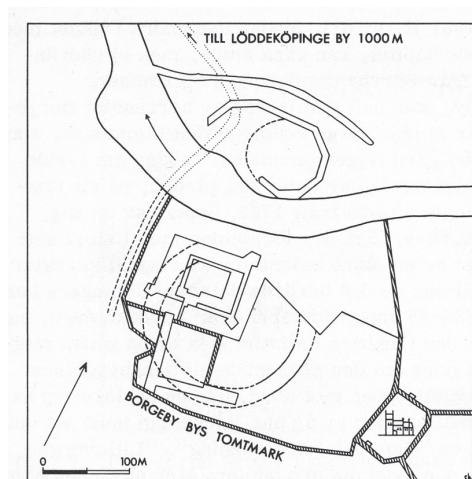


Fig. 6.
Borgeby gård med närmaste omgivning-
ar. Schematisk plan baserad på geo-
metrisk avmätning av Borgeby säteri
av A. Cöpingar 1722 samt karta till la-
ga skifte å Löddeköpinge by av W.M.
Beckeman 1836-38. Inom området för
Borgeby har dessutom inlagts en hypo-
tetisk ringvall, baserad på en i terräng
en mellan gården och kyrkan skönjbar
förhöjning, samt väster om gården en
existerande hålväg. Dess tänkbara fort-
sättning över Lödde å och mot Lödde-
köpinge har prickmarkerats.

Rikard Holmberg's ring fortress in Borgeby in 1977.

foundation, along with the head of the museum of cultural history in Lund Anders W Mårtensson, an archaeologist very experienced with the Viking Age. During the excavation remains were discovered that were interpreted as a silver/gold forge from the late 900s. Thus the ring fortress would likely have been a royal facility. During later excavations using a long shaft through the ring wall itself it was determined that it was built during the time of Harald Bluetooth.

Antonina does however mention this ring fortress in her writing already in 1963. At the time of Harald Bluetooth's death in 985 his younger brother Toke Gormsson was the king of Scania, according to the "*Gesta Wulinensis*". The exiled king-son Styrbjörn of the Swedes was at that time in Jomsborg near Wolin. He travelled to Scania and here, according to the "*Gesta Wulinensis*", Styrbjörn was a "guest of 'Tukki' in the fortress 'Burgerbau' (Borgeby), and here he attempted to persuade Toke to join in an expedition against 'Eirikusowi, the king of Szwitów, but he could not count on Tukki's aid."

The fortress "*Burgerbau*" in Scania which Toke had as his royal seat must have been the ring fortress in Borgeby by Öresund evidenced by the archaeological excavations. The existence of this fortress was however completely unknown to science in 1963. Thus the only logical explanation for how Antonina could write about it must be that she was translating a document from the 10th century.

Archaeological fact material 2

The northern burial mound in Danish Jelling was excavated already in the early 1800s. A wooden burial chamber was discovered. The grave was however already plundered and the dead body removed. Ever since this discovery the Danish national museum worked under the assumption that the pagan king Gorm, the father of Harald Bluetooth, was buried in the mound. After the son became Christian he had his father dug up and reburied in a wood church built to the south of the mound. This does however not match the remaining small objects from the tomb which show that a Christian was buried in the grave, not a pagan. These objects are a Christian cross, a silver communion cup and two fittings with crosses which may have been part of a potentially Christian book. (*Jörn Staecker: Monumenten i Jelling – myter och realiteter. Från stad till land. Lund Studies in Medieval Archaeology 29. Stockholm 2001.*)

In 1987 the Danish national museum published the results of the dendrochronological analyses performed on the wood from the preserved burial chamber. It was revealed that the timber was cut during the winter of 958/959. For the first time we now had a reliable dating of the

burial mound, which was unknown before 1987. A wooden support could also be dated, which had been used during the opening of the grave when the body was removed. This happened during the winter of 964/965. (*Kjeld Christensen & Knud J. Krogh: Jellinghøjene dateret. Nationalmuseets Arbejdsmark 1987.*)

We will now move on to the "*Gesta Wulinensis*" and read what the priest Avico wrote. He is the author of the chronicle, which is made clear in the text where his name is mentioned several times in the form "*I, Avico*". He is present during the burial of Harald Bluetooth's Christian mother: "*Theophani*" who was generous for all Christians was called '*Thiri*' by the king and we buried her according to her own wishes as per the eastern ritual, which we were given permission for by her son '*Harald*'. King '*Gurmd*' however defiled her burial and ordered her body moved to a place where the Danes celebrated a pagan feast called '*Sobatina*' by the Romans." Thiri was thus buried according to Christian ritual but the pagan Gorm moved her body to a pagan burial. Avico also specified the year when Thiri died. Of the year 962 the chronicle says: "*King 'Gurmd', who had not been himself for nearly five years, since the death of his beloved woman, recently had dreams and in them he faced his dead wife's fear for their son 'Knut' who risks to lose his life or to become terribly injured.*" Knut, Harald Blåtands older brother Canute, fell in a large battle on Ireland in the autumn of 962 according to the chronicle.

Of the year 964 the priest Avico writes the following: "*This year old king 'Gurmd' suddenly regained his strength and started thinking clearly, after having been chained to his bed for two years after losing his mind upon hearing of the death of 'Konut', his firstborn son. It was a manifestation where good turned to evil since the king, following the death of his wife had returned to old pagan ways and thereafter punished the name of Christ several times. I, as a true Christian, knew the old man who longed for his wife but who, affected by false gods, turned away to call her back from the land of the dead.*"

On the last of June that same year, missing his son and unable to ease his suffering after the loss of 'Thiri', the king sat down in the ship and, despite our objections, sailed out to sea and thus all knowledge of him disappeared."

As the chronicle mentioned that Gorm during the autumn of 962 not had been himself "*for nearly five years, since the death of his beloved woman*" Thiri, or Tyra, would have died in 957/958. She was brought to Jelling and buried in a mound as the chronicle also mentions Gorm spending much time on the mound of his dead wife. Gorm committed suicide in the summer of 964. Not until then could the new king Harald Bluetooth exhume his mother and again have her buried in the Christian way.

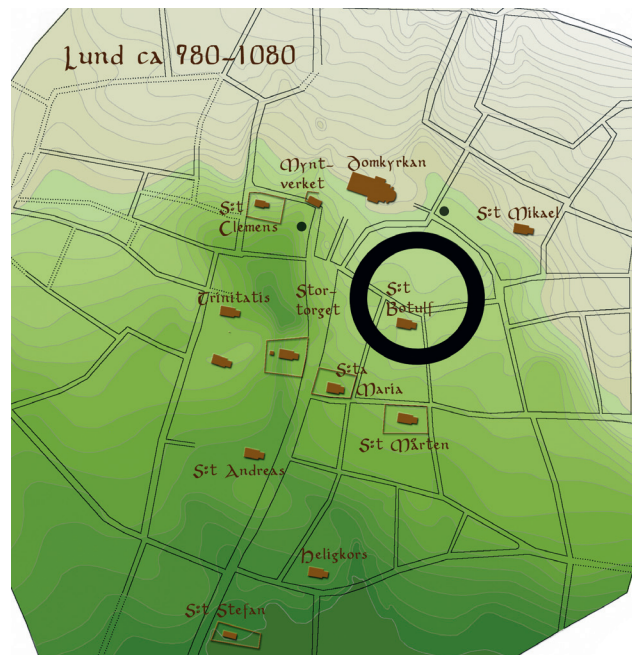
The years mentioned in the chronicle corresponds fully with the dendrochronological dating. These were however performed and published in 1987, 24 years after Antonina described them in her translation and eight years after her death. Before 1987 we had no knowledge about the time of death of neither Gorm nor Tyra. The only plausible explanation is thus that Antonina in 1963 translated a document from the 10th century, written by the named eye witness Avico.

Archaeological fact material 3

In 1990 a number of Danes from Bornholm obtained permission to examine Uppåkra a few kilometres south of Lund in Scania with metal detectors. They found a vast amount of splendid Iron Age objects. This became the start of the large Uppåkra project which is still ongoing.

A large city-like community existed here from the time just after the birth of Christ up until the end of the 10th century. In 2001 a strange building was discovered which could be fully excavated. It was revealed to be a pagan temple which according to discovered sacrificial finds likely was consecrated to the glory of Odin. Excavation of the thick cultural layers proved that this temple had been at the site for many centuries.

This discovery of a pagan temple ground was published in 2002 by professor Lars Larsson of Lund's University. (*Lars Larsson: Resultat från 2001 och 2002 års utgrävningar i Uppåkra. År 2002:3*) Antonina did however in 1963 likely describe the site in her transcription of the 10th century chronicle. During Harald Bluetooth's struggle against the German emperor in 974 he received aid from his vassal Haakon Jarl of Norway. After the battle the two became enemies. On his way home to Norway the pagan Haakon Jarl passed through the Öresund strait. Harald's younger brother Toke was at the time king of Scania according to the "*Gesta Wulinensis*". The chronicle describes what happened:



The probable Viking-age ring fortress in Lund.
Map: Sven Rosborn 2004.

"In the year of our Lord 975 'Tuca', the youngest son of king 'Gurmd', ordered the strengthening of the walls of the fortress he had built on the site where the year before God the Almighty spared him from the wrath of the unfaithful from 'Norregi'. These warriors, lead by their 'iarl Hakan', ruined by Satan himself, brought ruin to the lands and burned fortresses on both sides of the strait, killing the men and capturing the women and children. Our three brothers, monks from the monastery [...] died the martyr's death, when on the meadows of 'Scanviue' (Scania) they refused to deny their faith in Christ and ended their lives in flames. 'Tuca' and the rest of the faithful then found shelter at the site of the dead, which had been dedicated to pagan gods for centuries, and vowed that a temple of the Lord would be built on this site if all their lives were spared. This did indeed happen, and 'Tuca' ordered a temple of God be built and I sanctified the corner stone, and on it the holy signs were carved that it was 'Tuca' who ordered this temple of the Lord to be built in the city 'Lvntarumn'."

Here it is told of an old pagan site of importance near Lund. This would reasonably have to be Uppåkra. It also mentions the walls of a fortress that existed in 974. In 2004 I published my examination about a Viking Age ring fortress likely located in the middle of present-day Lund which still is indicated by the layout of the existing road network. (*Sven Rosborn: Den skånska historien. Vikingarna. Malmö 2004.*) City Antiquarian Claes Wahlöö in Lund fully shared my opinion, since excavations he himself had made there uncovered a potential moat belonging to this fortress.

The information about a large pagan site close to Lund and a possible Viking Age ring fortress in Lund was first published and made known after the year 2001. But Antonina has included information in her transcript of the "*Gesta Wulinensis*" in 1963 which backs up these archaeological research results revealed 40 years later and more than 20 years after her death.

Archaeological fact material 4

In 2011 a large silver treasure was found near Silverdale in Lancashire in England. The find was dated to the time around the year 900. A silver coin of a hitherto unknown type is part of this treasure. On one side the coin has the name "AIRDECONUT" and on the other side the writing "DNS (dominus) REX" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Airdeconut>). The discovery caused a great sensation since no Scandinavian king with this name was previously known from the written sources. Some believed it could be the king Harthacnut who was mentioned in "Ragnarssona þáttr". There is nothing in any preserved written source about this king spelling his name "Airdeconut" however. Half a century before the discovery of this coin Antonina does however mention this king in her translation of the "Gesta Wulinensis". The chronicle has a chapter about the year 947 which describes the positions of power in Scandinavia at the time:

"The country of Danes, which had its border with the Northern March at Wieglesdor, consisted of the Jutland peninsula and many other islands stretching from the east to the west and from the south to the north. The largest of all the islands was called Selund and the others were also inhabited by Northmen and they had kings that were called Jarls. These lords were not always friendly towards the kings of Jutland and Selund. Conflicts, disagreements, truces, or affinities between the noble families were a permanent part of the life of the northern people, as demonstrated by the treaty with Fejn and Sconviue, which granted their sovereignty in exchange of the annual share of the plunder which had to be an equivalent to the crew of a dozen of ships.

The Danes had also jarls, which were autonomous and never had to pay a tribute, and these were the lords at the dominions of Svidjod and Norregi. The lords of these lands were interminable contenders to the throne of the Danes as they were descendants of the blood of the Olaf the Terrible and Konut the High. The latter conquered the country called Norfynbrarik using sword and fire, and there he held the royal power perhaps before or during the pontificate of pope Benedict IV. It is said that the king Konut was a man of great posture and he was a head taller than each and one of his men, and therefore he was called Aidire, which in the language of the natives of Norfynbrarik meant tall."

Benedict IV was Pope during the years 900-903, and this date also corresponds to the dating of the silver find from Silverdale. The fact that Antonina already in 1963 mentions and describes this up until

Antonina's text from the year 1963 which mentions King Aidi-reconut (on the line below). The work with the translation from Latin to Polish of the text to this page she did on May 19, 1963, which is dated at the top right.

(Fragment 47) A.D. 943 19.V.1963

Haraldus zostali oni ochrzczeni przez
dostojnego arcybiskupa Atheldagusa,
apo opuszczenie Bistum Bremensis w
wierze chrześcijańskiej wychowywani
byli w pałacach w Merseburgu a później
Quidelingeburgu. Przekywali ponad także w
Magdaburgu oraz Brennaburgu. Wiadomo
aliści iż Konut i Haraldus ochrzczeni
zostali tego samego roku, w którym
Atheldagus otrzymał biskupstwo na archidiece
i rozpoczął swój urząd który trwa do dziś.

A.D. 947

(Kontynuacja fragmentu 87)

+ o tron wszystkich Danów napsuli przez
lata wiele krwi panującym w Jutlandi i
Selund, którzy wciąż widzieli siebie samych
jako prawdziwych i jedynych potomków Olafa
Strasznego i Konuta Wysokiego. Ten ostatni
ogniem i mieczem zdobył kraj zwany Nor-
fynbrarik i tam wkładając piastować bodajże
przed pontyfikatem będnie w czasie trwania
pontyfikatu papieża Benedikta IV a nie męciem
wyższym o głowę od zarównie wszystkich pod-
danych jak i od wszystkich swych wojów
był, tedy zwanym był Aidire, co w języku

Haraldus Atheldagus Quidelingburg Brennaburg
4 Marschburg Norfynbrarik Konut Aidire

2011 completely unknown king based on what was recorded in an obviously very old Latin manuscript leaves no room for doubt regarding the value of the chronicle as a historic source material.

Closing words

Ahead of the publication of Harald Bluetooth's grave I have among other things worked with the Polish translation of the Latin manuscript "*Gesta Wulinensis*", which Antonina had access to. We have been able to safely determine that it was written before her death in 1979 and with a safety bordering on certainty during the year 1963. From this I have through archaeological discoveries made far more recently been able to clearly demonstrate that several of the things she wrote about in 1963 were not known at the time of writing, and not until far later.

This is the basis of my evidence regarding the authenticity of the discovery. To this we may add other sources such as a large number of preserved letters with postage-stamped envelopes between her and her daughter where excerpts from the 1840s priest's diaries are quoted. The priest did for example find an original medieval letter in the archive of the count of Wiejkowo, which describes the chronicle. When Antonina told her daughter about this in a letter in the early 1960s she wrote the following:

"The document (i.e. the manuscript) is important as it describes the history of Pomerania from the first missionary journey of bishop Otton in the 1120s up until 1173 where it abruptly ends. The title and author of the chronicle is unknown and the priest tells that it is described in an attached document dated to the year of our Lord 1267 with two seals, one which is ruined and the second depicting two riders on a horse with the text "Sigillum Militum."

In this document the chronicle is mentioned as the 'Gesta Wulinensis ecclesiae pontificum'. The interesting thing about the chronicle is the fact that it begins with a description of the people and rulers of Pomerania during the 180 years prior to the first missionary journey of bishop Otto in the 1120s and the first event mentioned take place at the time of the coronation of emperor Otto I. The name of the chronicle really means 'The history of the Wolin bishops' but it contains so much more."

The seal on the letter that Antonina describes here was that of the grandmaster of the Order of the Knights Templar. The seal was used from the early 12th century and throughout the 13th century. Each country had their own subordinate commander in this knightly order and this seal could also be used by them. The Knights Templar were granted the Wiejkowo region by bishop Wilhelm of Cammin (bishop 1244 – 1251).

Ahead of the publication of this book about Harald Bluetooth we decided in 2019 to make a final attempt to look for more potentially preserved material from the Sielski family in Poland. We then discovered that Stanisława was forced to store a large amount of her furniture at a distant relative's home in Kozalin in northern Poland when moving to Sweden in 1988. The furniture was found in a smaller building, more like a shed, in the garden of a villa. In the 10 m² room the furniture was stacked on top of each other and it was impossible to get more than a metre into the room. When the furniture was brought out to be transported to Sweden a box containing various documents was found, among them Antonina's translation of the manuscript "*Gesta Wulinensis*". It had laid forgotten in this shed since 1988. Only now was the full transcript found, which we had previously only known excerpts of from Antonina's quotes in letters to her daughter in the 1960s.

Before the publication of the final book in 2021 I asked archaeology professor emeritus Mats Larsson of the "Linne University" in Kalmar to read the manuscript and provide his opinions. After reading through it he was positive toward the material and our work. I also contacted the historian and archaeologist Carl L. Thunberg. Since he had written an extensive work 2012 at the University of Gothenburg about the battle of Fýrisvellir (Slaget på Fyrisvallarna i ny tolkning) in 986 close to Uppsala, I wished for him to read the book and in particular the detailed description of this battle in the Gesta Wulinensis. When I asked him to comment on the book he wrote the following:

"The Viking King's Golden Treasure is a highly interesting book based on exceptional archaeological and historical new finds. The findings on which this book is based are in a range of ways the most interesting that have been discovered in modern times, when it comes to source material for the much debated subject areas that this book deals with.

– Carl L. Thunberg

Historian and archaeologist"